

Health Talk 0003 “Tuberculosis”

Announcer: Welcome to “Health Talk”, where you’ll find “Good Advice for Good Health!” Now, here are Ty and Paula with today’s topic.

T: Hi there!

P: Today on Health Talk we’re talking about tuberculosis.

T: Tuberculosis is a disease, often called TB. It used to be known as Consumption. It is easy to catch, but can be easily treated. Tuberculosis can be found in many parts of our body, but it usually affects our lungs. When TB is present in our lungs, hard lumps grow in them making it difficult for us to breathe.

P: Tuberculosis is spread from one person to another through the air. If someone who has TB coughs or sneezes without covering their mouth or nose, the germs go into the air and can be breathed in by someone else. They could then catch TB.

T: The people most likely to catch Tuberculosis are children and older people, those who live in overcrowded places, and those who live where people may be suffering from the disease already. Also, those who smoke, those who don’t eat the right foods, those who have no home to live in, people whose immune systems are weak from HIV/AIDS, and those who are suffering from other illnesses. These people need to be extra careful.

P: Make sure you get enough rest; eat a variety of foods like meat, eggs, milk, cheese, fruit and vegetables whenever you can. If possible don’t stay in the same house as someone with TB. We all need to look after ourselves so we don’t catch Tuberculosis, because it is easy to catch when there are TB germs in the air.

T: If you have TB you should take extra care of your health because you are more likely to catch other diseases as well. Your body will be weak and unable to fight the germs that can make you sick.

P: It is important for us to cover our mouths when we cough and to use a handkerchief or tissue when we sneeze, so we won't put germs in the air. We also need to wash our hands after we cough and sneeze. This will help stop germs that make us sick from spreading to other people.

T: How do you know if you have tuberculosis? Well, it makes you feel tired and you will lose weight because you don't feel very hungry. It can also make you feel very weak. With TB, you often feel hot and sweaty at night. It is harder to breathe. It makes you cough, usually for more than three weeks. At first it can be a dry cough, and later, you cough up blood. You might also have chest pain. If you have any of these symptoms, see a doctor as soon as possible so they can start treating the disease with medicines.

P: Tuberculosis can be easily treated, but it will take many months until the treatment is finished. The medicines used to treat TB can make you feel a bit sick, but this will go away when you stop the treatment. If you drink alcohol while you are having the treatment you may feel worse. It is very important to take the medicine for as long as the doctor tells you, even if you feel well soon after you start to take the medicine.

T: If you stop taking the medicine, the tuberculosis will return, and it will be much worse and much harder to treat. So make sure to do exactly as the doctor tells you.

Announcer: This has been "Health Talk," a production of HCJB Global Voice. For more "Good Advice for Good Health" stay tuned to this station, or log on to hcjbglobal.org.